

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 AID-01 /026 W

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R 180924Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4635

INFO USMISSION NATO

SECDEF WASHDC

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCUSAFE

16TH AF, TORREJON/CV

UNCLAS MADRID 1214

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, SP, US, PFOR, OREP (PELL, CLAIBORNE)

SUBJ: TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION--SENATOR PELL'S

PRESS CONFERENCE

SUMMARY: PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY SENATOR PELL IN MADRID BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FRIDAY, FEB 13, RECEIVED GOOD SPANISH PRESS COVERAGE, WITH EMPHASIS ON PELL'S STATEMENTS THAT HE WAS FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE MOVEMENT OF SPAIN TOWARD DEMOCRACY AND THAT HE EXPECTED THAT HE WOULD SUPPORT RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MAJOR SPANISH NEWSPAPERS ALL GAVE PROMINENT ATTENTION TO SENATOR PELL'S PRESS CONFERENCE, INCLUDING FRONT-PAGE TREATMENT IN MADRID'S LEADING DAILY, "ABC." ALL REPORTS WERE ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR IN TONE.

2. PELL WAS QUOTED (IN SPANISH) AS STATING: "I CAME WITH SKEPTICISM, GIVEN MY POSITION AS A LIBERAL, BUT I BELIEVE I WILL FAVOR RATIFICATION, SINCE I BELIEVE SPAIN IS MOVING TOWARD DEMOCRACY." HE WAS FURTHER QUOTED AS STATING: "I MUST SAY THAT THINGS HAVE CHANGED VISIBLY AND I AM IMPRESSED, FOLLOWING MY CONVERSATIONS WITH THE KING AND MESSRS. ARIAS, FRAGA, AND AREILZA, BUT THE EFFORT THEY ARE MAKING TO FOLLOW UNCLASSIFIED

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THE PATH TOWARD DEMOCRACY...I SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT THE

APPROPRIATE FORMULA IS THAT MENTIONED TO ME BY MR. FRAGA TO THE EFFECT THAT THE EVOLUTION OF SPAIN GOES ON WITHOUT HURRY BUT ALSO WITHOUT PAUSE."

3. THESE REPORTS ALSO HAVE THE SENATOR COMMENTING THAT RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY COULD HELP FAVOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN SPAIN; THAT HE WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT SOME IN SPAIN WANTED TO GO FASTER AND SOME SLOWER, BUT THAT THE IMPORTANT THING SEEMED TO BE CONTINUOUS CHANGE RATHER THAN RAPID CHANGE. TOLD THAT A SPANISH POLL INDICATED THAT THE SPANISH BELIEVE THE TREATY TO BE MORE TO THE BENEFIT OF THE UNITED STATES THAN SPAIN, HE REPLIED THAT MANY AMERICANS BELIEVE THE CONTRARY AND THAT, COMPARING THESE TWO SETS OF OPINIONS, HE WAS LED TO BELIEVE THAT THE TREATY WAS PROBABLY RATHER BALANCED.

4. HE EXPECTED THE TREATY WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE EARLY THIS WEEK AND THAT THE SENATE'S DECISION WOULD BE MADE IN A PERIOD OF TWO TO FOUR MONTHS. RATIFICATION WOULD DEPEND ON THE SENATE'S PERCEPTION OF PROGRESS TOWARD DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN SPAIN.

5. THESE REPORTS ALSO CARRY PELL'S STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT HE WAS IMPRESSED BY THE RELATIVELY LOW NUMBER OF PERSONS IN SPAIN'S JAILS AND THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY THE SPANISH GOVT THAT ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS WOULD BE RELEASED SOMETIME TOWARD JUNE EXCEPT FOR TERRORISTS ACCUSED OF CRIMINAL ACTS.

6. IN SUM, THE SENATOR WAS REPORTED TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT HE WAS LEAVING SPAIN WITH A GOOD IMPRESSION, ALTHOUGH A SOMEWHAT INCOMPLETE ONE, CONSIDERING THE SHORTNESS OF HIS VISIT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, TREATY RATIFICATION, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID01214
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760061-0667
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760240/aaaabiom.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ullricre
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUL 2004 by oatisao>; APPROVED <03 SEP 2004 by ullricre>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION--SENATOR PELL'S PRESS CONFERENCE
TAGS: MARR, PFOR, OREP, SP, US, (PELL, CLAIBORNE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006